

Colorado Guardsmen deployed **573 Army**  
since Jan. 1, 2010: **15 Air**

# **HIGHGROUND**

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

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# Guard family sings for thousands at Bronco game



Colorado Army National Guard Sgt. Archie Cooley, his wife Lisa, a Colorado National Guard family readiness support assistant, and daughter Hollie, a high school sophomore, sing the national anthem before the Broncos Thanksgiving matchup with the New York Giants at Invesco Field at Mile High in Denver Nov. 26.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane

**By Spc. Benjamin Crane**  
**Colorado National Guard Public Affairs**

The bright stadium lights shone down on players, coaches, staff, fans and members of a unique family on Thanksgiving.

For the first time, the Cooleys got to partake in on-field activities at Invesco Field at Mile High in Denver Nov. 26.

Colorado Army National Guard Sgt. Archie Cooley, his wife Lisa, a family readiness support assistant for Colorado National Guard Family Programs, and daughter Hollie, a high school student, took center stage to sing the national anthem before the holiday matchup between the Denver Broncos and the New York Giants.

After hearing them sing at a recent change of command ceremony, another Guardsman, Lt. Col. Kenneth D. Chavez, recommended the family to the Broncos. After hearing their demo tape, the Broncos asked the Cooleys to

participate in the pre-game festivities.

“Lt. Col. Chavez ... said that he had a connection with the Broncos,” said Lisa. “So he asked me if I would be willing to do other events. And I said yes ... and he got us in contact (with the Broncos). I thought it would be an awesome opportunity since my husband and son are both in the military.”

And when the time came to sing, the family was awestruck.

“As we walked out on the field ... it was very humbling and overwhelming,” said Lisa. “I personally hadn’t been to a Broncos game before and neither has my daughter. ... Just to be able to go on the field itself is an awesome opportunity, but to sing the national anthem as a family is just very overwhelming.”

Singing as a family has been a longstanding tradition.

In Houston, where they lived prior to moving to Colorado, the family sung on a regular basis with their two older


daughters who still reside in Texas.

However, since the Cooleys moved to Colorado five years ago, they haven’t had the same chances to use their talents – until recently.

Archie Cooley, a helicopter maintenance technician with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 135th General Support Aviation, has always been a huge Broncos fan. He joined the Guard when he arrived in Colorado after seeing his son Anthony enlist. Both father and son work as CH-47 Chinook helicopter mechanics in the same unit at the Army Aviation Support Facility on Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora, Colo.

“I am still a little nervous and excited,” said Archie as he walked off the field after singing. “This is awesome!”

Hollie, the youngest in the family, echoed her father’s thoughts.

“I think we did pretty well. It was a good experience,” she said. 



A computer-generated image of the readiness center's final look  
Image courtesy HB&A Architects, Inc.

# O' Hail O' Hail O' Infantry

## Colorado Guard breaks ground

By Spc. Joseph K. VonNida and Spc. Benjamin Crane  
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

**CENTENNIAL, Colo. (12/3/09)** – The mayor of Fort Lupton, Colo., welcomed a “Queen of Battle” to town as the Colorado National Guard broke ground on a new armory Dec. 2.

Upon completion, the armory, which will more commonly be referred to as a readiness center, will be home to Company B, 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry. The unit is one of six elements from the

state’s newest light infantry battalion, which has ties to communities across Colorado. The location of the center will better enable the COARNG to provide surrounding communities military support during state emergencies.

Congressional dignitaries, Colorado National Guard leaders, civic leaders, local firefighters and police officers, and Fort Lupton residents attended the event.

“The construction of new readiness centers is a high priority for the Colorado Army National Guard, which

needs to grow in strength to continue to be always ready, always there for our communities, state and nation,” said Adjutant General of Colorado Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards.

Located on a 25-acre site on the southwest corner of County Road 31 and 9th Street, the 35,000-square-foot building will contain an assembly hall, classrooms, a library, a learning

Colorado Adjutant General Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards and Colorado Army National Guard Commander Col. Dana Capozzella cut cake together following the groundbreaking ceremony for the COARNG's newest readiness center in Fort Lupton, Colo., Dec. 2.



Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



center, a kitchen, a recruiting office, a physical fitness area and restrooms. The land was purchased for \$875,000 and construction is estimated to cost approximately \$11 million. Completion is scheduled for April 2011.

“The impact of this facility includes putting \$1.3 million annually into the Fort Lupton economy (and) to employ 50 to 75 trades people at the readiness center construction site,” said Mayor Tommy Holton. “More than that, I look forward to seeing men and women in uniform in and around Fort Lupton. I think this will make a big impression on our youth ... This may be an option for them as well. It will help them look beyond the city limits.”

The building’s architecture has been designed to integrate with the surrounding environment and will include appropriate landscape and parking facilities. There will be 119 part-time positions and five full-time positions based at the readiness center.

One project goal is to attain Leadership in Energy and an Environmental Design Silver Rating as developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. Sustainability features of the building include water and energy saving measures, indoor environmental quality and


using local building materials during construction.

Originally, planners looked to Denver for a building site. Due to higher land prices, the search was extended north. Fort Lupton is located in an area that already supported recruiting and retention. In addition, it’s an advantageous location for responding to state emergencies, said COARNG Construction and Facilities Management Officer Col. Debi Roberts

But just as important, the community has welcomed the Colorado National Guard. Residents have worked proactively with the CONG from land selection through design and will continue to partner during construction.

“Of the five new armories in Colorado, we are the only Fort,” said Holton. “I want to thank the 1st Battalion, 157th Infantry for putting the Fort back into Fort Lupton.”

The Colorado National Guard hasn’t built a new armory since 1998.

*Infantry has been called “The Queen of Battle” for hundreds of years. Most believe it originates from chess. The infantry is the basic component of any military force. Just as the queen piece on a chess board, the infantry is the most powerful, decisive and important part of the game of war.* 

Colorado Army National Guard Construction and Facilities Management Officer Col. Debi Roberts, City Councilman State Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg, Fort Lupton Mayor Tommy Holton, Colorado Adjutant General Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards and COARNG Commander Col. Dana Capozzella, break ground at the site of the COARNG’s newest readiness center in Fort Lupton, Colo., Dec. 2.

PHOTO BY SPC. JOSEPH K. VONNIDA



# Last Dance

*The exotically beautiful brunette danced in the arms of the handsome Soldier, her long wispy green gown flowing, gliding against the legs of his dress blues as they waltzed. Lost in each other's eyes, the coffin and lilies in the background and weeping mourners clad in black don't attract their attention until the end of the song.*



*Movie short speaks  
of love eternal*

By Maj. Laura Kenney  
100th Missile Defense Brigade (GMD)



The lyrics, sung in Polish to a hauntingly sad tune, say in part, “No, no, you cannot go from me, you are taking the last drop of water from me. The emptiness is like a fire in my heart. No, you cannot go away from me, the leaves are still fresh and green, it is not time for them to fall ...”

The above scene is taken from a movie short called “Last Dance,” and its star, the exquisite brunette, is Margaret Lambos, wife of Capt. George Lambos, who commands Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground-based Midcourse Defense), a Colorado Army National Guard unit based in Colorado Springs.

The movie short, as it is called in the business, won the Audience Choice Award at the Chicago International Reel Shorts Festival for 2008. The clip runs seven minutes, and its viewing typically produces

an audience of dampened eyes.

The story, in what almost appears to be a music video but is instead a short, artistic movie, tells of a war widow, Olivia, attending her Soldier husband’s funeral with her family, including her adorable blonde toddler. Wearing a long black cape, Olivia is overcome with grief at the sight of her husband, attired in the full glory of his dress blues and laid out in his coffin. She collapses on his chest, after kissing his cold cheek. Her parents rush to her side, and frantically try to resuscitate her.

Meanwhile, at stage left, the apparent ghost of Olivia’s husband appears and holds out his hand to the slumped widow. An equally incorporeal but glowing wife stands, shedding her mourning cape, and a lovely pale green gown is revealed. She takes her spouse’s strong tanned hand, and they begin to waltz. As they move in time and space, eyes locked, all the other action fades but continues as if in another dimension – the parents weep, the babe appears forlorn.

Finally, after apparently endless moments in each other’s arms, the Soldier husband leads his wife back to her still slumped physical form and to their baby. He tenderly kisses her goodbye and hands her a rose. Lingeringly, their hands part. Sadness and loss are evident, but also, joy at the temporary reunion, trust in the permanent one still to come; and, not least, an abiding, living love in the presence of their little one, to whom he relinquishes her. Olivia awakens, her parents rejoice, she kisses her infant, and walks down the church’s aisle with her face buried in a mysterious rose. The image fades to black.

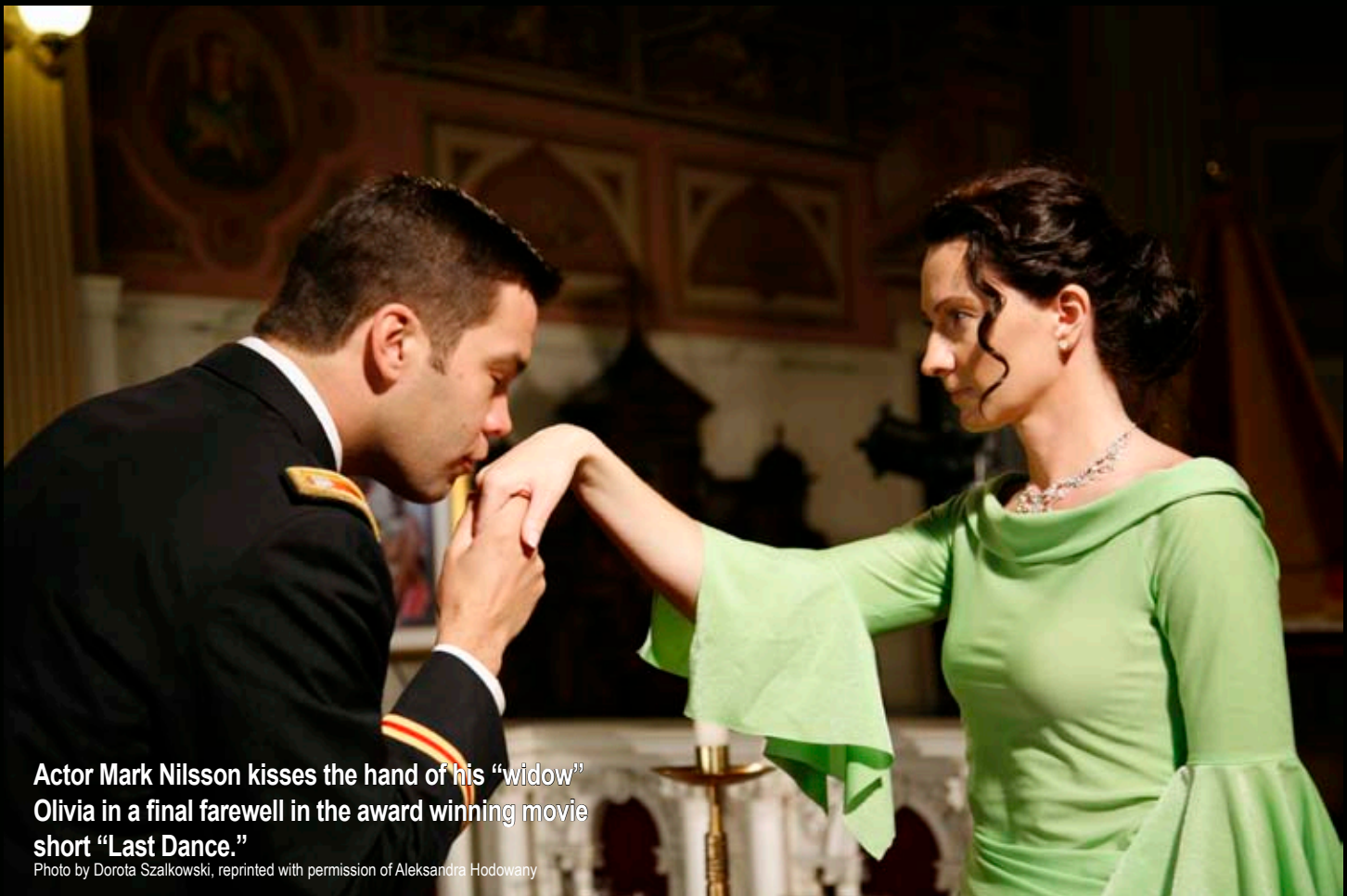
Margaret Lambos, a native of Poland, speaks English with an attractive accent. The acting job came about in the following fashion: She has been friends with the sister of director/producer, Aleksandra Hodowany, since her college days back in 1991. The sister knew that Lambos excelled in ballroom dancing and choreography, and, aware that Hodowany was working on a project called “Last Dance,” featuring ballroom dancing, suggested her friend for the choreography and dancing. As fate would have it Hodowany was already thinking the same thing!

Keeping her script private, Hodowany sent the lyrics to multiple choreographers, seeking a one who would come closest to her own vision intuitively. She said that many of the other choreographers produced visions of separating lovers. But to Lambos, the sad lyrics, which in the movie are sung by Polish singer Grazyna



**“Olivia” (Margaret Lambos) dances with the ghost of her “husband,” actor Mark Nilsson, in the award winning movie short “Last Dance.”**

Photo by Dorota Szalkowski, reprinted with permission of Aleksandra Hodowany



**Actor Mark Nilsson kisses the hand of his “widow” Olivia in a final farewell in the award winning movie short “Last Dance.”**

Photo by Dorota Szalkowski, reprinted with permission of Aleksandra Hodowany

Auguscik, spoke of a loss greater than that suffered in day-to-day living.

“To me, as a military wife, and in today’s world where we are surrounded by sad images of that terrible knock on the door, my mind immediately went to that permanent loss, where the husband doesn’t come home again. And I imagined how wonderful it would be, though still in a sad and tragic way, if the wife were able to have that one last dance with her husband, to say goodbye. I got goosebumps and teared up just thinking about it,” said Lambos.

When she explained her vision to Hodowany, it elicited almost the same reaction. The director’s script, held closely secret, had followed a path very similar, except that the deceased civilian husband had died of natural causes. Seeing the great pathos and timeliness of making the hero of her movie a Soldier, the story from then on featured the military focus.

The resultant short dampened eyes and won a prestigious award. Speaking of dampened eyes, Lambos had worried that, when it came time to cry in the movie, she would be unable to do so on demand. As it turned out, she needn’t have fretted.

“Once we were there, in that church, with the actor playing my husband in his dress blues, the atmosphere made the magic happen. Not only did I cry ... I bawled like a baby! They had to fix my makeup, and in fact, almost everyone else in the place – the other actors and the technicians –they also cried. Even the monk who took care of the church we were filming in cried,” said Lambos.

The church, Our Lady of Sorrows Basilica which survived the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, is no longer an active church, but its baroque architecture was an appropriate backdrop for the romantic, dramatic film short.

The director, who lives in Chicago, is very passionate about her product. She has been making films since she was 19, and is now in her early 30s. She considers this piece her best and most heartfelt to date. There’s a reason beyond the obvious for that.

“I lost a fiancé to death when I was much younger. You never quite get over that, but I wanted to make this film to somehow express my belief that there will be an eventual reunion, and that the spirit and love do go on. That is why I originally conceived of the husband as being a civilian. But, when Margaret came up with the military notion, it almost



immediately clicked. At first, I was a bit afraid that perhaps enough people wouldn't identify with the military part of it, but she rightfully convinced me that, with our nation at war, yes, people would empathize.

"I had tried filming this before, with other actors and with my earlier vision, and we had it situated in a funeral home. I have to say, it was terrible. It just did not convey what I wanted it to, so I sort of gave up on the project for awhile. But then, when we thought of Margaret for the part, and she came up with her wonderful concept, everything started to click," said Hodowany.

"We did have a little difficulty finding a uniform to fit our handsome male star, Mark Nillson, who, brawny and tall at 6 (feet) 2 (inches), is not a standard size. But once that happened, it was almost a miracle, like pieces of a puzzle falling into place. I was still worried about the venue, but then, the singer of the song, Grazyna, called me very excited to say she had just given a concert in a so beautiful church, and the priest had told her we could do our film there. It was perfect! And the chemistry between Mark and Margaret was immediate – I really felt this version of our film was meant to be. I say 'our' because any film is a collaborative process, and this truly was exactly that.

"I am very grateful that this film is touching people's lives. I know that the making of it has touched mine, and everyone else's that was involved in its production. As another example of it being 'meant to be,'"

Hodowany said with a chuckle in her voice.


The short recently became available online at: <http://www.spiritualtv.eu/page.php>.

The Lambos couple is justifiably proud of the piece, especially the husband part of the team.

"I thought Margaret had just gone to help a friend with a video that had some ballroom dancing in it. When I saw the finished product I was blown away. I was not prepared for

the emotional aspect or the professionalism of the film. I appreciate the tribute to military families and the message. I am very proud that Margaret was able to participate and I have an admiration for the high quality of work and effort by Aleksandra," said George Lambos.

For her part, Margaret said, "Well, first off, of course it was a big honor just to be asked to choreograph the dancing. At first, I didn't understand that they wanted me to do the dancing as well, so when I figured that part out, I was doubly honored. But most importantly, when I was allowed to have the impact of putting the military flavor and emotions into it, I was very proud. My friends and family who have watched it have said their respect for the military and the spouses have grown immeasurably since viewing it. I think it really does send a message of hope that, despite the terrible tragedy of losing a husband or a wife, these widows or widowers and children will survive. It is a wonderful thought that perhaps, somehow, they could get that opportunity to say that last goodbye, and to know that they will meet again."

Anyone viewing "Last Dance," especially those affiliated with the military, and even more so in these days of a nation at war on two fronts, can empathize with its message of love lasting beyond death... and eventual reunion. The Lambos and Hodowany families have helped spread that message of hope. And now... I have also had that privilege. 



**"Olivia" (Margaret Lambos) stands grieving by the coffin of her movie "husband" who was slain in battle.**

Photo by Dorota Szalkowski, reprinted with permission of Aleksandra Hodowany

# High Country 'HOGs' haul heaps of holiday hoopla through Longmont

## Sleigh ride helps families of deployed Colorado Guardsmen celebrate holidays

By J. Flint  
104th Public Affairs Detachment

**LONGMONT, Colo. (12/05/09)** – The Santa Sleigh Ride, a charitable event by the High Country HOG (Harley Owner's Group) Chapter based in Frederick, Colo., to support the families of deployed Soldiers, drew a large crowd and raised morale.

Family members of 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery, a Colorado Army National Guard unit currently serving in Iraq, as well as veterans and supportive civilians came together for the day's events, which consisted of an appearance by Santa Claus with HOG Chapter's bikers as his envoy, a feast prepared for the children and spouses, and children given gifts by Santa Claus before his departure – via Harley, of course.

Starting the day off at the High Country Harley Davidson store, the families gathered to see Santa Claus' first appearance. Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Rich Rugg piloted a helicopter to the first site to provide a static display for the event. The Colorado National Guard supported the Santa Sleigh Ride toy run because the civilians support the troops, he said.

The High Country HOG Chapter decided to organize this year's Santa Sleigh Ride to get some gifts for the

children whose families are disrupted by deployments, said HOG Chapter Director Marc Stefanowski.

The Chapter has done the Santa Sleigh Ride for various causes for a number of years, but Stefanowski said this is the largest turnout and the first time done for military families.

"I'm very excited and very proud that we're able to do a little bit for the folks whose families are kind of torn up and whose families have given a lot for this country," Stefanowski said. "It's just a great honor to be here."

The Santa Sleigh Ride supports the dependents of Soldiers deployed in Iraq, and see to it that they have a Christmas, said Phil Roemmich, director of this year's Santa Sleigh Ride. Formerly an air safety officer drafted toward the end of the Vietnam War, his plan this year was for the Santa Sleigh Ride to begin at High Country Harley Davidson and end at the Longmont Armory. Santa would then make an appearance and deliver toys to children and the HOG Chapter would provide a lunch for all in attendance.

Some citizens in the northern Colorado area got in touch with the armory in Longmont for the event and wanted to do a toy drive for the families of the area units that are deployed, said Maj. Charles Zakhem, rear detachment commander of 3-157 FA, who was in attendance to represent the unit.

Zakhem added that the American Legion and the Patriot Guard sponsored a Harley Davidson drive in the area for family morale.

Zakhem said that Soldiers and civilians need to be aware and thankful for the support regardless of politics. For them to come out on a freezing day, ride their motorcycles for the military and support the families really means a lot.

John Baker, chairman of the trustees of the American Legion Post 32, has been supporting families in this way for 15 years and said that this event turned out very well.

Americans have to support their



Harley riders arrive at the National Guard Armory in Longmont, Colo., after the High Country HOG chapter's Santa Sleigh Ride Dec. 5.

Photo by Pvt. Zach Sheely





**Santa Claus gets set for the ride to Longmont, Colo., for the High Country HOG chapter's Santa Sleigh Ride Dec. 5.**

Photo by Pfc. J. Flint

troops while they're gone and support their families here, Baker said. Baker, a Vietnam veteran, has a son in the Marine Corps who is currently in Afghanistan, so he knows all too well what it's like to be away from family during the holidays.


"It is surprising how many people you touch," said Army Sgt. Martin May of Battery A, 3-157 FA. May recently returned to Colorado after being shot in the eye while serving in Iraq. A father of three, he's glad to be back with family during the holidays despite the circumstances, but because of his duty first attitude, he'd rather be in Iraq with his unit.

Christyan Duncan, a mother of two children, 5 and 9, is the spouse of a 3-157 FA Soldier. Her husband's been away since April and the holidays are a difficult time to be separated from loved ones, she said. Duncan has attended family readiness events such as the Santa Sleigh Ride before and said she greatly appreciates the support of people in similar positions as herself.

After a hearty lunch and delivering gifts to the children and spouses of deployed Soldiers, Santa took his leave by way of motorcycle.

Stefanowski said the HOG Chapter did a great job with the 2009 Santa Sleigh Ride, and that the Chapter has

shown its support quite strongly.

"I'm thankful for everything that everyone did today and all the effort that they put into it to help the families," said Duncan. 



**Harley riders cruise up Main Street in Longmont, Colo., for the High Country HOG chapter's Santa Sleigh Ride Dec. 5.**

Photo by Pvt. Zach Sheely

# Guard members

## may apply for relief during deployments



In 2005, Colorado legislators established the Military Family Relief Fund, to assist deployed Colorado military families. Over the last four years, Colorado taxpayers have donated an average \$200,000 per year.

The MFRF assists Colorado military families, whether active duty, National Guard or Reserve, who have been impacted by mobilizations in support of the Global War on Terror. The purpose of the fund is to help replace lost income due to deployments and provide emergency relief during crises.

### **MFRF Criteria:**

- The servicemember is currently on active military duty in a combat zone for a minimum of 30 days
- The servicemember (or family member) has submitted a complete application
- The servicemember is a Colorado resident, for income tax purposes, as evidenced by a leave and earnings statement acquired during the deployment timeframe.
- For income replacement, the servicemember must show a loss of household income due to the deployment. Applications for loss of income must be received within six months of the servicemember's return.
- A servicemember or family may also submit receipts for emergency expenses that occurred during a deployment. Emergency assistance can only be granted during the deployment period.

If you meet the above listed criteria, you may download complete instructions and applications at the address listed below. Completed applications should be submitted to the branch-specific point of contact listed on the contact sheet.

**NOTE:** This is not typically a quick-access fund. Applications are accumulated, reviewed and processed monthly. Average turn-around time is two to four weeks, depending on when an application is received.

Service personnel or their families can learn more about the Military Family Relief Fund and how to apply for assistance by visiting <http://www.dmva.state.co.us>. Type MFRF in the search block.

Direct donations to the MFRF can be made via state tax refunds through the Check off Colorado program. Personnel completing their annual Form 104 may opt to donate portions of their state tax refunds to this cause.

### **Who the MFRF has supported:**

It couldn't have come at a better time. As of October, my husband's civilian employer was no longer supplementing our income to cover the difference of my husband's Army base pay. The difference in pay was pretty substantial. This has been a long and trying year for us, as I am sure for all the families of our deployed Soldiers. This money has helped ease the financial burden and has given me a peace of mind knowing the bills will continue to be paid. It's been such a relief, no pun intended, and I'm so grateful.

*— Lisa, spouse of a currently deployed Soldier*

It's challenging enough to have a spouse and father away from the family for an extended amount of time, and it's especially difficult when things go wrong at home. While my husband was deployed, we experienced a major storm that caused extensive damage to our home. We also had a water heater explode – which flooded our basement – a broken garage door, and two of our automobiles broke down and couldn't be repaired. When things seemed hopeless, we heard about the Military Family Relief Fund. These funds allowed us to put our life back in order. There is always a bit of stress when a spouse is away and again when he returns. I can truly say that the financial support of the MFRF decreased that stress tremendously.

*— Diane, spouse of a recently deployed Airman*





# UNIT SAFETY DAY

## A SMORGASBORG OF EVENTS

By Maj. Laura Kenney  
100th MDB(GMD) PAO

From an often gory and somewhat disturbing movie about food safety, through avalanche probes and beacons, to vehicle safety inspections, the Soldiers at Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 100th Missile Defense Brigade (Ground-based Midcourse Defense) in Colorado Springs, Colo., were treated a full menu of safety classes designed to keep them safe this winter – in the kitchen and outdoors – Dec. 10.

The food safety class, taught by 1st Lt. William Palermo of the unit, focused on requirements to handle and cook foods properly, since one can't always trust that purchased products are safe. The movie followed animal by-products and demonstrated how frequently they could be infected by salmonella and e-coli. Case histories of people who had died from these food borne illnesses made the subject much more personal than scientific.

Next, two skiing experts from a local ski shop presented a class on ski and snowboard safety, as well as tips on how to safely venture in the backcountry Colorado is famous for. The newest




Brian Tuli, an expert skier and backcountry outdoorsman who works at a local sports store, gives a class on the latest in safety equipment for Colorado's rugged environment to Soldiers of the 100th Missile Defense Brigade, (Ground-based Midcourse Defense) at the unit's safety day Dec. 10 in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Photo by Maj. Laura Kenney

in safety devices for boots and binding were described and avalanche protective gear was demonstrated. The most pertinent advice of all: Never ski or go into back country alone, and, always go prepared with the proper equipment.

Last but far from least was vehicular safety. Staff Sgt. Scott Thorn instructed everyone to be fastidious about sweeping all the snow off their cars to ensure that the drivers following them wouldn't want to "road rage" them for the subsequent avalanche of snow on their windshields. The importance of vehicle preparation and maintenance was discussed, the necessity of a winter survival kit was stressed, and safe winter driving habits

were detailed. The afternoon was topped off by each individual Soldier having his or her vehicle inspected by his or her supervisor.

Menu accomplished, the Soldiers left to brave the single digit temperatures and salmonella riddled outside world, better armored against some of its dangers. 

Martin Luther King, Jr.

# THE MEETING

## MLK observance

**Date:** Jan. 12

**Time:** 1 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

**Location:** JFHQ-CO Auditorium

6858 S. Revere Pkwy., Centennial CO, 80112

The critically acclaimed play, "The Meeting", is a powerful drama about the lives, philosophies and times of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. "The Meeting" is an emotional, clever, and intense confrontation between Malcolm X, his hostile bodyguard, and Martin Luther King. It gives factual, but surprising, information about the two men, their commitment to human rights, and the times.

<http://www.jodisolomonspeakers.com/themeeting.html>



**Sponsored by:**

CONG Special Emphasis Program  
Contact Maj. Anne Green for more  
information at (720) 250-1175 or  
[anne.green@us.army.mil](mailto:anne.green@us.army.mil)

## Santa gets helpers

Colorado Air National Guard Master Sgt. Chris Roybal helps Tyberius Jackson, 7, wrap a present for his younger sister at the Colorado National Guard's annual Santa Workshop



Dec. 12, 2009. Every year, the CONG's Family Programs Office sponsors the workshop with donations from local companies, non-profit agencies, state employees and private donors. The purpose of the workshop is for servicemembers and their families to benefit from a little extra help during the holiday season. Kids and parents "shop" from the donated items while volunteers help younger children choose and wrap presents for their family members. A second Santa Workshop was held the same day at Veterans of Foreign Wars post 4051 in Colorado Springs. Tybeirus' father is Army National Guard Staff Sgt. Claudius Jackson of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 140th Service and Support Aviation at Buckley Air Force Base.

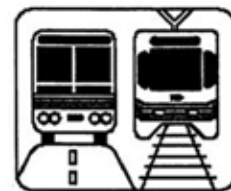
Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral







Regional Transportation District



## **Military personnel can continue to ride free on RTD in 2010**

The Regional Transportation District Board of Directors approved a resolution extending through December 31, 2010 the allowance for all U.S. military personnel to ride free on all RTD services. All members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard and Reserves are entitled to ride free on any RTD service including special services such as skyRide and BroncosRide.

To be eligible to ride for free, all active duty military personnel must either:

1. Be wearing the appropriate Class A or Class B uniforms. These types of uniforms are described as:

- The Class A uniform is worn with the dress uniform service jacket and with all decorations, a tie, and rank insignia.
- The Class B uniform is a little less formal, without the dress uniform service jacket and is usually worn with an open shirt collar.

**OR**

2. Present an active duty military identification card with the words "Geneva Convention Identification Card" on the bottom.

For route and schedule information, please call RTD's Telephone Information Center at (303) 299-6000. Speech and hearing impaired may call (303) 299-6089 for the. Visit RTD's website at [www.RTD-Denver.com](http://www.RTD-Denver.com).



**By Army Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta  
138th Public Affairs Detachment**

It's the kind of thing one might hear at an office – the voices of seasoned professionals analyzing information, and exchanging questions and assessments.

Except that these professionals are the Soldiers of the 169th Fires Brigade, and their business – run in an olive drab green tent packed with tables, maps and computers – is destroying the enemy. The command staff of the Colorado Army National Guard unit is one of several taking part in Yama Sakura 57, a bilateral command post training exercise with members of the Japan Ground Self Defense

Forces.

The brigade has been participating in Yama Sakura for more than a decade. It helps Soldiers maintain their technical skills and use their battlefield operating systems in tandem with Japanese ground forces to better understand how to integrate forces, said Brigade Commander Col. Gregory Miller.

The exercise, which began Dec. 8, involves a notional battle to defend Japanese sovereignty. The brigade's command staff and Soldiers of its subordinate unit, the 138th Field Artillery Battalion, are at Camp Chitose, located on the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido.

The Soldiers are part of Team One, a notional task force composed of American and Japanese soldiers.

“We’re in command and control of all the field artillery assets supporting the exercise,” said Miller. “We tell them where to move, where to shoot and when to shoot.”

Throughout the notional exercise, the command staff has to respond to

**Soldiers of the 138th Fires Brigade, Kentucky Army National Guard, and the 169th Fires Brigade, Colorado Army National Guard, work together in their command tent as part of Exercise Yama Sakura-57 at Camp Higashi-Chitose, Japan, Dec. 6.**

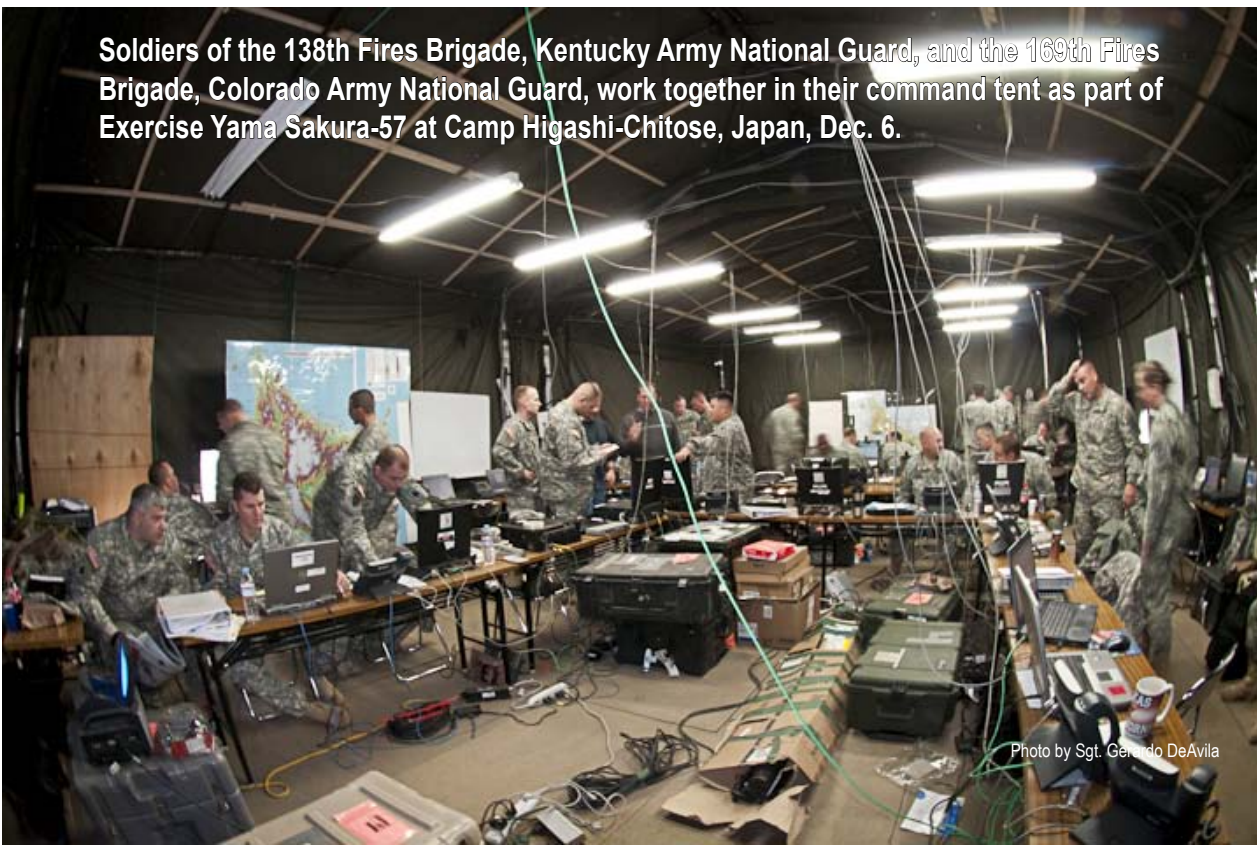


Photo by Sgt. Gerardo DeAvila





Japan Ground Self-Defense Force soldiers stand in formation during the opening ceremony of Exercise Yama Sakura-57 at Camp Higashi-Chitose, Japan, Dec. 7.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey F. Hilton

insurgency fight – to cause very little collateral damage.”

The 169th will be using its artillery assets to perform several missions, like supporting Team One’s deep attacks, softening up its objectives with preparatory fires, supporting its passage of lines with suppressive fire and smoke, and suppressing the enemy’s air-defense missile

scenarios generated by the war game.

“Exercises like this are our only opportunity to exercise our entire staff on our wartime mission,” said Sherman.

In wartime, the 169th can field five battalions equipped with an array of indirect fire weaponry, including the Multiple Launch Rocket System, the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System and 155 mm howitzers.

One MLRS battalion can cover a square kilometer with bomblets, and that’s just an example of the brigade’s combat power, Sherman said.

Though Yama Sakura 57 involves a conventional war scenario, Japan’s ban on land mines means the brigade is using precision fires, just as it did when the unit supported the 25th Infantry Division in Iraq in 2006-07, Sherman said.

“For this exercise, we’re using satellite-guided missiles and rockets,” he said. “We fired a lot of guided MLRS rockets in Iraq – it was part of the counter-

batteries, Sherman said.

The staff attacked other enemy targets as well. Inside their command post, Soldiers could be seen sifting through map and computer data, and talking urgently among themselves to locate and destroy the enemy’s long-range artillery.

“With a high-intensity conflict like this, the biggest challenge you face is the sheer speed of change,” Sherman said. “You have to be very persistent on always keeping up-to-date on the changing conditions of the battlefield.”



Army Col. Gregory Miller, commander of the 169th Fires Brigade, Colorado Army National Guard, is interviewed by a Japanese reporter from NHK Television at Camp Higashi-Chitose, Japan, Dec. 7.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta







# Giving back to the community:

By Air Force Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares, Colorado  
National Guard Public Affairs

Bicycles line the floors of the Colorado National Guard armory in Grand Junction, Colo., Dec. 21.  
Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares

It was like a child's dream: A multitude of toys, big and small, for boys and girls from tots to teens lined the shelves of the Colorado National Guard Armory in Grand Junction, Colo. Families from all across Grand Valley congregated outside the facility in their cars awaiting their gifts from the generous donors Dec 21-22.

For two days, the Colorado Army National Guard, Salvation Army and numerous other people and organizations came through in grand style to assist more than 1,300 local families by providing food and Christmas gifts to those unable to afford anything else this holiday season. An amazing 60,000 pounds of food and thousands of toys were contributed despite the damaged economy, which has taken its toll on charitable giving this year. Families wishing to receive food and toys had to register through the Salvation Army by filling out applications and telling their stories of need. Those selected were given a specific day and time to report to the armory.

Days prior to the event, 15 Soldiers volunteered their time assembling the distribution site outside and inside the armory; packing boxes full of non-perishable items and sorting toys by age, gender and size in preparation for the myriad of needy families.


Because of the overwhelming amount of families who were expected, extensive planning went in to the distribution. During the event, volunteers guided the families from inside the armory where they listened to a short briefing, then to another area to shop for toys.



Frozen turkeys donated to the Salvation Army wait to be distributed to needy families by Colorado Army National Guardsmen Dec. 21.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares



Children's clothing donated to the Salvation Army wait to be distributed to needy families by Colorado Army National Guardsmen Dec. 21.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares



# National Guard, Salvation Army partner to help families in need




Colorado National Guard Soldiers load food for a needy family at the armory in Grand Junction, Colo. Dec. 21.

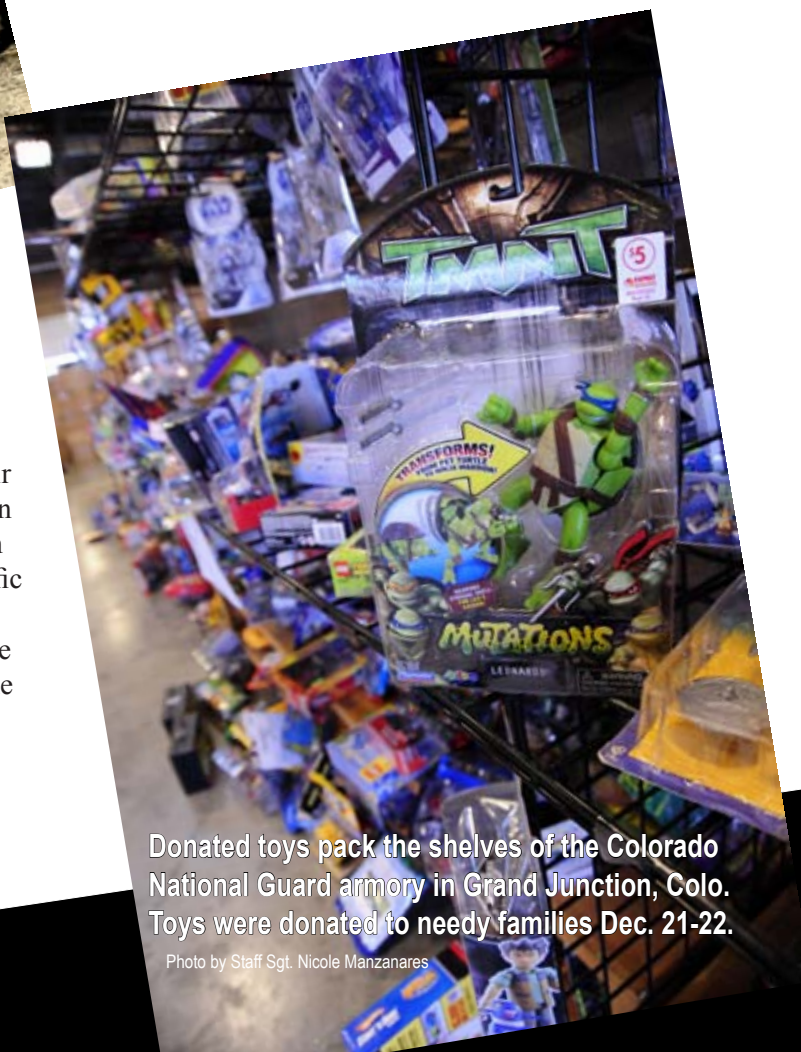
Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares

Two sections of the armory were reserved for the clothing and toys. One section, called “Angel Bags” contained gifts donated through the Salvation Army’s Angel Tree program. Through the program, needy children’s names and lists of their specific wants and needs were previously hung on a tree like ornaments. Patrons chose listings from the tree then shopped for specific items for specific children. If a child’s name was not previously chosen, families shopped in another section of the armory, called the “store,” which contained all the other donated toys. Though the process, each needy child received a large gift, a small gift, an outfit and a stocking stuffer. After the families shopped, they drove to the back of the building where volunteers waited

with the food boxes. Each family, depending on size, received one or two food boxes filled with fresh fruit, potatoes, onions, eggs, a frozen turkey and other holiday dinner fixings.

“We take (it) for granted, but these kids will wake up having four to five presents under the tree, and they will be thrilled to death,” said Army Master Sgt. Tim Smith. “There were a couple women in tears today. They are relieved and a weight has been lifted off of their shoulders because their kids are going to have something to open on Christmas. This is why we volunteer to do this, because there will be a kid with a smile on their face.”

“I do this because I love people and everybody should have a Merry Christmas,” said Susan Potts, a Salvation Army volunteer. 



Donated toys pack the shelves of the Colorado National Guard armory in Grand Junction, Colo. Toys were donated to needy families Dec. 21-22.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Nicole Manzanares



# **'Doc' awarded** *prestigious medal*

By Air Force Master Sgt. Cheresa D. Theiral  
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs



BUCKLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. (12/5/09) – A local doctor was awarded a rare distinction in an unexpected ceremony at the Colorado Air National Guard headquarters.

COANG Col. Jerome “Doc” Limoge received an Air Medal for meritorious achievement during his combined service as a Guardsman and an active duty surgeon.

As Colorado Air National Guard state air surgeon, he volunteered to deploy to Balad Air base, Iraq, and as a flight surgeon for the 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron. Prior to that, he was an active duty surgeon and commanded the 10th Expeditionary Medical Squadron at Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. He served in both operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

As a lead flight surgeon and aircrew member, he provided expert medical and surgical care to numerous critically combat wounded troops on multiple aeromedical evacuation flights from Afghanistan, Iraq and other forward locations to Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

He also flew aboard Army C-12 and C-23 combat flights into forward operating bases in Iraq.

An Air Medal may be awarded to U.S. military and civilian personnel for single acts of heroism or meritorious achievements while participating in aerial flight and foreign military personnel in actual combat in support of operations. (Source: U.S. Air Force)





# The Family Unit

## Families of deployed enjoy spirit of Christmas at governor's house

**By Cheryl Montgomery**  
**Colorado National Guard Family Programs**

As children entered the home high atop a hill in Denver, the gentle roar of the young crowd filled the foyer, the palm room, the drawing room – and up the three-story spiral staircase. Sunlight poured through elegant arched windows, reflecting off the marble floors and lighting an extra twinkle in children's eyes.

All four Christmas trees in the home sparkled, homemade cookies found hungry lips and crafts were assembled by eager little hands – with occasional assistance from a few Colorado National Guard officers.

The gathering Dec. 11 was part of an annual tradition for a select group of children to celebrate the holidays. Gov. Bill Ritter, Jr., and First Lady Jeannie Ritter, opened their home to CONG children who have a parent who is currently deployed or will deploy soon.

While the holidays can be a difficult time for families at home and deployed troops alike, the visit to the governor's mansion was a reminder to Guard families that they're not

alone in their unique challenges.

Among those challenges are celebrations without a parent. "Flat Daddies" and Webcam faces may be all some children see of their deployed parents during the holidays this year, but the opportunity to share celebrations with other families who are missing their loved ones is a means for children to recognize they're not alone. It also gives spouses a short break as their children busy themselves making crafts, eating cookies and anticipating the appearance of a special guest.

Five Soldiers from Colorado's special forces support company cleared the roof and assured the area of operations was safe for a rooftop landing.

With the squeals and screams of delight echoing down the foyer, Santa Clause magically appeared though an upper door, stepped down the spiral staircase and into the crowd, settling himself between a twinkling tree and a government-issued cot draped with a fuzzy G.I. jacket and covered by gift bags. But before the kids could sit on Santa's lap and enjoy the North Pole-issued treats, it was story time with the first lady.

With any civilian crowd, "The Night Before Christmas" would be the classic oratory selection. But this wasn't just any crowd. These children heard the military version, "The Soldier's Night Before Christmas" by Christine Ford and Trish Holland. The children and spouses listened intently as Jeannie Ritter read the story about deployed Soldiers sleeping on cots on Christmas Eve, waiting for their helmets and boots to be filled with letters, drawings and photographs from home.

Some spouses took a quiet opportunity to text their loved ones overseas – as the day ended 7,000 miles away – reassuring their loved ones that the collection of crafts and photographs from the governor's home would soon be mailed to them in their holiday packages – and perhaps end up in their boots on Christmas morning.



The Duncan family poses with Colorado Adjutant General Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards, Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter and First Lady Jeannie Ritter, Dec. 11. Spc. Theodore Duncan is serving in Iraq.

Photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane



## Nomination season opens for 2010 Secretary of Defense

### Employer Support Freedom Award

*Guardsmen, families encouraged to nominate supportive employers*

**ARLINGTON, Va. (11/2/09)** – Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a Department of Defense agency, today announced the opening of the nomination season for the 2010 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award. National Guard and Reserve members and their families are eligible and encouraged to nominate employers who have provided exceptional support of military employees above the federal law requirements. Nominations will be accepted at [www.FreedomAward.mil](http://www.FreedomAward.mil) from Nov. 2, 2009 to Jan. 18, 2010. The Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the U.S. Government to employers for their outstanding support of their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve.


The 2010 recipients will be announced in the spring and honored in Washington, D.C. at the 15th annual Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award ceremony on September 23, 2010. Recipients of the 2009 Freedom Award met privately with President Barack Obama and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. Dr. Jill Biden, Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs Dennis McCarthy presented the awards at a ceremony attended by members of Congress and senior government and military officials.

Almost one-half of the U.S. military is comprised of the National Guard and Reserve. The Department of Defense shares these citizen warriors with their civilian employers, many of whom provide

significant support to their employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. 2009 honorees ranged from AeroDyn Wind Tunnel, LLC, a small automotive racing wind tunnel testing company in North Carolina to large businesses including Microsoft and AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals to Santa Ana, California Police Department, a public sector employer. Past recipients of the Freedom Award have provided significant support including full salary, continuation of benefits, care packages and family assistance to employees fulfilling their military obligation.


The Freedom Award was instituted in 1996 under the auspices of ESGR to recognize exceptional support from the employer community. “There is much excitement surrounding the 15th anniversary of the Freedom Award,” noted acting ESGR Executive Director Ms. Polli Brunelli, “and we’re enthusiastic to begin selection of the 2010 recipients from amongst all of the heartfelt nominations that will be submitted by thousands of proud Citizen Warriors.”

ESGR is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972. Its mission is to gain and maintain employer support for Guard and Reserve service by recognizing outstanding support, increasing awareness of the law and resolving conflicts through mediation.

For questions regarding the Freedom Award nomination process, please visit <http://www.FreedomAward.mil> or contact Maj. Melissa Phillips, ESGR Public Affairs, at (703) 380-9262. 



## Education Foundation scholarship applications due

Open season is approaching for 2010 spring scholarships with the Education Foundation for the Colorado National Guard. This can make a big difference for families trying to pay for college or trade school. Please pass this information on to your unit members. For applications [log on to http://www.ngaco.org](http://www.ngaco.org). 



# Mile-high aloha

## Visiting skiers rescued following holiday storm

By Spc. Joseph K VonNida  
Colorado National Guard Public Affairs

Each year the holidays bring joy and cheer to millions of people. Frequently, the winter season brings harsh weather as well.

As a major winter storm system crossed the Midwest, Kira Davis and Duc Ong from Hawaii felt the effects.

While more than 100 Guardsmen from Colorado's neighboring states were activated to prepare for and recover from the blizzard-like conditions that blanketed the region for much of the holiday week, the Colorado Army National Guard had a different mission: search for the Hawaiians missing from a cross-country ski trek in mountainous terrain.

Shortly after the Colorado National Guard's Joint Operations Center was notified by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center of two missing skiers in the state's backcountry, the COARNG was called into action. At approximately 11 a.m. on Dec. 26, the High-Altitude Army National Guard Aviation Training Site (HAATS) launched an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter to assist the Lake County Sheriff's Department in the search and rescue mission.

"We had a vague idea of what we were up against," said HAATS Commander Maj. Joshua Day. "The mission was pretty similar to most other search and rescues. It was cloudy and cold but there was no wind."

The Lake County Sheriff's Department said that the skiers called for help the evening of Dec. 25, but rescue crews were unsuccessful in locating the couple and the search was postponed until morning.

The couple spent the night in the bitter, sub-zero weather, huddled under a tree using a sleeping bag for warmth.

At approximately 1:00 p.m. on Dec. 26, Day and HAATS Pilot Chief Warrant Officer 4 Carl Gray spotted the two skiers near Turquoise Lake west of Leadville Lake in the White River National Forest. The skiers were taken to the Lake County Sheriff's command post in good condition.

"We were able to use all the skills we teach at the school to successfully execute this mission," said Day. "We determined the wind speed and did a terrain analysis of the search area based on the information obtained from Lake County officials."

Day said that the rugged terrain at more than 11,000 feet made for a tight landing site and the trees didn't allow much rotor clearance. The Kiowa landed approximately 15 feet from the skiers.

"The Kiowa provides us the best visibility so we typically use this aircraft to search for lost or missing persons," said Day. In this specific situation, the larger UH-60 Black Hawk would not have been able to land where the skiers were located.

HAATS, located in the small mountain town of Gypsum, Colo., near Vail, has frequently served as a launch-

ing point for search and rescue missions when terrain or altitude favors the use of a military aircraft with specialized capabilities. The primary role of HAATS is to train helicopter pilots from all over the world to manage power in high altitude environments.

While HAATS is in a prime location to launch helicopters for civilian emergency support, it is not the only aircraft operations asset available to the Colorado National Guard. The Army Aviation Support Facility located on Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora, Colo., has a number of CH-47 Chinook, UH-60 Black Hawk and OH-58 Kiowa helicopters that can be used to support state missions by providing a quick reaction force of troops to aid in state missions, such as aerial support for wildfires and blizzards.

"Colorado Army National Guard helicopters can support life or limb search and rescue operations in conjunction with civilian emergency rescue service crews when the terrain or altitude makes landing a civilian (emergency service) aircraft questionable," said COARNG State Aviation Officer Col. Joel Best. "Our aircraft are equipped with internal and external rescue hoists and have superior altitude capability which improves safety. Once an external hoist rescue is completed, our aircraft expedite the patient to the nearest ground or air ambulance."

On average, the COARNG conducts 25 search and rescue missions a year. Most of these missions are for hikers in the highest areas of Colorado's mountains.

Colorado National Guard officials have suggestions for people planning adventures in the mountains: Have a plan to survive in case you get lost or injured:

- Take warm clothes and a sleeping bag.
- Have a sufficient supply of food and water.
- Bring a signal mirror, GPS and cell phone.
- Go in groups of two or more and don't separate.
- If you're lost, get to an open area and stay there. Be visible to rescue crews.

OH-58 Kiowa






From left to right: Adjutant General of Colorado Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards; Steve Alcock, service area director for Colorado and Wyoming; Michelle Gray, beneficiary services education representative; Don Brown, vice president, Midwest operations; Col. Andy Meverden, COARNG State Chaplain; Senior Airman Ijigale Beltran, program manager for the Colorado National Guard Foundation

Photo by Air Force Capt. Darin Overstreet

## TriWest health gives to National Guard Foundation of Colorado

“TriWest is both privileged and honored to have the opportunity each year, around the holidays, to assist our National Guard partners with a contribution of funds,” said Don Brown, Vice President, TriWest Midwest Operations, after presenting a \$15,000 check to the Colorado National Guard Foundation on behalf of TriWest Healthcare Alliance Dec. 4. “Our hope is that the funds can help ease some of the stress and burden that falls to our nation’s defenders and their families as they willingly protect our country’s

freedoms. With so many of our TriWest employees being either retired military, married to a military member or having served in the military, it is easy to relate to the stresses associated with serving in uniform. While these contributions are small in comparison to the sacrifices being made by the Colorado Guardsmen and women, we simply hope the TriWest gesture demonstrates our appreciation as both the West region managed care support contractor and as Americans.” 



# Fast facts about the Colorado National Guard

**Leadership:** The Adjutant General is Air National Guard Maj. Gen. H. Michael Edwards, located at Centennial, Colo., (720) 250-1500. Edwards is a 1973 graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy. The Colorado National Guard will celebrate its 150th anniversary on Jan. 23.

## Topics of State Interest:

- Secure sustained funding for new facility construction for both Army and Air National Guard (25% state/75% federal)
- Recruit and retain quality forces with federal and state incentives
- Equipment priorities (Air: F-35 Lightning II Jet; Army: 4 UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters)
- Installation encroachment
- Domestic emergency preparedness
- Re-establish Youth ChalleNGe program in Colorado

## Strength of Colorado National Guard as of Jan. 6, 2010:

- Total military strength: 5,617 authorized/5,372 assigned
  - \$243M Economic Impact
- 4083 auth/3871 assigned Army National Guard (ARNG)
  - \$131M in economic impact '08-'09
- 1534 auth/1501 assigned Air National Guard (ANG)
  - \$102M in economic impact '08-'09
- 113.5 Military and Vets Affairs (DMVA)
  - \$10M in economic impact '08-'09
- 1923 Civil Air Patrol (CAP)
- Personnel mobilized/activated/alerted: 655
  - 573 Soldiers (ARNG)
  - 15 Airmen (ANG)
  - Personnel serving Air Sovereignty Alert mission: 67 authorized/64 assigned
- COARNG forces deployed since 9/11: 3,910
- COANG forces deployed since 9/11: 1,385

## Colorado National Guard Joint Forces:

- Joint Force Headquarters-Colorado: Centennial
- United States Property & Fiscal Office: Buckley AFB
- CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP)
- Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC)
- National Guard Response Force (NGRF)
- Critical Infrastructure Protection-Mission Assurance Assessments (CIP-MAA)
- Counter Drug/Reconnaissance Air Interdiction Detachment
- 8th Civil Support Team (WMD): Buckley AFB

## Essential 10 Mission Essential Tasks:

- CONG is GREEN for Essential 10 METs for Tier 1 events. Status is maintained in Joint Capabilities Database.
- CONG is capable of EMAC support for most Essential 10 METs depending on the scale and nature of the request.

## Major units in the Colorado Army National Guard:

- 169th Fires Brigade: Denver
- 3rd Battalion, 157th Field Artillery (HIMARS): Currently deployed to OIF
- 147th Brigade Support Battalion: Denver
- 89th Troop Command: Denver
- 5th Battalion, 19th Special Forces Group (Airborne): Watkins
- 117th Space Battalion: Colorado Springs
- 193rd Military Police Battalion: Denver
- 1st Battalion, 157 Infantry: Denver
- 2nd Battalion, 135th General Support Aviation: Buckley AFB (Note: Tasked to support CCMRF through September 2010)
- 893rd Troop Command Battalion: Denver
- 100th Missile Defense Brigade: Colorado Springs
- USNORTHCOM Detachment: Peterson AFB
- 168th Regional Training Institute: Fort Carson
  - Centennial Training Site
  - Modular Training Battalion
- Special Operations Detachment-Korea: Denver
- Colorado Medical Detachment: Buckley AFB
- High-Altitude Army Aviation Training Site: Gypsum

## Major units in the Colorado Air National Guard:

- 140th Wing, Buckley AFB
  - Operations Group
    - 120th Fighter Squadron (F-16 Falcon): Buckley AFB
    - 200th Airlift Squadron (C-21 Learjet): Peterson AFB
  - Maintenance Group
  - Mission Support Group (Engineers/Security Forces/Services/Personnel/Communications)
  - Medical Group
  - 137th Space Warning Squadron, Greeley ANG



*Approved by: Col. Theresa Z. Blumberg, Chief of TAG Staff  
Prepared by: Capt. Elena O'Bryan, State Public Affairs Officer  
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